

**From:** Bob & Daneen Smedile [smed5@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 16, 2009 12:32 PM  
**To:** DEPT-PLANDEPT-\*\*PLANNING\_DEPARTMENT; DEPT-PLANDEPT-PLANNING\_COMMISSION  
**Cc:** Dennis Virts; board@glbr.org; Steve Perkins; David Serley  
**Subject:** Consideration for Approval of Scott Jenkins Memorial Park in Hamilton

Planning Commission Members,

I would like to take a moment to provide some insight with regard to several points/questions brought up at the end of the long evening, as it applies to our Youth League play. As you begin your work sessions on this very important issue, please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information. Just as you accepted the expertise of Dr. Lattimer regarding horticulture, I hope you give some level of respect to those of us who are experts in youth sports management. I have been a youth baseball coach for 17 years, at all levels of play, and have managed 3 different volunteer organizations -- I have been on the GLBR board for 3 years, and president for the past two years. In that time, we have been recognized (last year) by Volunteer Loudoun as Volunteer Organization of the Year and we were recently inducted into the Southeast Regional Babe Ruth Hall of Fame.

As I stated last evening (in 3 minutes) we don't just take from our community parks and recreation, we give back; Our State, Regional, and World Series tournaments, through visiting players and their families, provide economic and financial support of a large number of Loudoun businesses (Hotels, Restaurants, Sporting Goods, Outlets and Malls, Car Rentals, Airlines, Grocery Stores, etc.). We coordinate closely with Loudoun Convention and Visitors Association (LCVA) to organize these events -- they recognize our value to the local economy. Finally, we give back to the fields we use; With the help of our Babe Ruth Softball league, last year we completely funded and installed (labor) three scoreboards at Woodgrove park in Round Hill and we regularly fund field improvements at Fireman's Field, when we can afford to do so. We have also regularly supported and funded baseball-related community education programs, such as the annual Emancipation Day Celebration (Negro League Baseball Players attendance).

Greater Loudoun Babe Ruth has been serving our youth for over 30 years -- our players are the 13-18 year olds who all play on the larger 90 foot diamond. There are only 6 lighted fields in all of Loudoun County (5 of which are available for our use in the fall - Fireman's is used for youth football). Even in the spring, Fireman's Field is used by Loudoun Valley H.S. because they do not have a field of their own -- they get priority on that field, even their practices trump our game requests.

The lighted fields scheduled for use at Fields Farm (in planning for 8 years now) do not include a 90 foot field, at best it will free up Fireman's Field in the fall for our use.

1. Are all of the players in our league Loudoun County residents? Absolutely!
  - Our Babe Ruth charter identifies our area of operations as being Loudoun County -- Additionally, Parks and Recreation require that all youth leagues requesting use of Loudoun fields provide proof of not-for-profit affiliation and rosters of all players with addresses before they will begin to schedule our season.
2. Although the time at which the lights must be turned off is 11pm, we rarely play that long
  - We have only had to play that long for some of our tournament games where the teams are tied and cannot end that way or when a game has been delayed by rain and restarted.
  - Our rules for regular season play limit play - "No new inning can begin after 2hrs from the start of the game."

3. Contrary to an opinion stated last night, we do make sure that our boys are done playing at a reasonable time and work fiercely to schedule around school events, tests and exams, etc.

- Part of the problem is that since we only have 6 full sized fields, people are forced to drive longer distances from home to play ball. This is especially the case in the fall, when one of those fields (Fireman's) is not available due to its reconfiguration for use as a youth football field.

- Please do not confuse GLBR with a travel baseball program, we are a recreational league and work hard to ensure player safety

4. Use of the speaker systems and noise levels caused by play at the field

- During regular season play, we do not use the PA system
- The PA system is used for tournament play only -- even then, we are encouraged to keep the volume reasonable (experiential knowledge - Fireman's Field)

5. Traffic Concerns

- You should look at Fireman's Field and get some experiential knowledge from World Series Event organizers. Fireman's actually presents a more complex traffic problem, as ingress and egress are much more limited. However, we have never had a problem with traffic - even at the peak of tournament play.

- During regular league play, if you take Mickie Gordon park as an example - where there is a large field and soccer play we usually see no more than 25 cars at a time. With one field, only two teams play at time and some of those boys carpool with each other -- each team consists of about 13 players and even if the families all drove separately that would be 26 vehicles.

- Even a tournament at that field would only have two teams playing at one time -- there is only one large field that we can use. But it does allow us to split tournament play between fields, taking pressure off the traffic flow at one field.

6. Light use beyond the allotted time limit

- Fireman's Field, again, can be used as an example - Parks and recreation provides an attendant at the fields where we have these extended facilities and services. We are bound by the limitations placed upon us and we live by it. If the drop dead time is 11pm or 10pm or 9pm, regardless - the attendant will turn off the lights.

- At Mickie Gordon, there is no ancillary lighting so if we turn off the lights immediately after play ends, people cannot find their cars, funny but true. At this new field, parking lot lighting will allow drop dead lights off with enough ancillary light to allow people access to their vehicles safely.

7. It was mentioned that a snow storm may cause issues with the dark cloth retraction

- We end play in the fall by 31 October -- so far we have not had snow before the end of October -- all fields are not used after that time until April of the following year.

- If there is any type of foul weather, we do not play. The fields are managed by parks and rec -- they determine field closures due to weather regardless of the time of year.

I am available to provide any information you need about our youth programs and sincerely hope that you include us in your work sessions regarding this matter.

If we do not get more lighted fields soon, we will have to turn players away if we cannot provide a venue for them to play on. You cannot continue to allow for increased growth by approving additional housing starts without considering the ancillary effect that will have on youth activities. We are way behind the growth, this would help a lot.

Sincerely,

Bob Smedile

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